

ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

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The Graduate School
Morehead State University

April 6, 2017

THE POWER OF POSITIVE:
UTILIZING DISTRICT STAFF IN IMPROVING LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS

Abstract of capstone

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the
College of Education
At Morehead State University

By

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April 6, 2017

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THE POWER OF POSITIVE:
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The capstone project focuses on students in two extremely small, rural elementary schools and the Foster Meade Career and Technical Center (CTC) in Lewis County, Kentucky. Laurel Elementary is located 15 miles south of Vanceburg, a town of 1,300 on the Ohio River. The area is part of the Appalachian foothills, which has steep hills, dense forest and crystal clear streams. The CTC is located in Vanceburg. Garrison Elementary is located in Garrison, Kentucky. All three schools are located in a county considered distressed by the 2010 Census website. Most of the local income consists of farming, logging, or commuting to various factories or business. Students that attend these schools usually have multiple family members who have attended the small school prior to them. All three schools have been low performing schools at various times.

The project was created by two district staff serving as motivators and encouragers. As motivators and encouragers, district staff can then analyze and assist low performing schools in the process of reform. The district staff must assess the current status of the school based on current practices and the most recent data available. A plan must then be put in place that builds on the current strengths of the school and addresses any gaps that have been identified after the assessment. Constant and consistent monitoring occurs to determine the impact of the strategies and to track the progress towards the goal. Finally, the plan is revised based on the

findings of the monitoring and current information. These steps are executed in conjunction with the school level principal being the active leader in this process and the district staff supporting the process.

KEYWORDS: low performing schools, district staff, motivators, progress, data.

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DEDICATION

This capstone is dedicated to the students of Lewis County who deserve and need the best of each of us every day. We hope you will dream big, work hard, and change the world to be a better place.

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We would like to thank Dr. Sam Wright, Dr. Victor Ballesteros, and the many other people who helped create the doctoral program at Morehead State University. We would also like to thank Dr. Shane Shope, Dr. Michael Kessinger, and the many other people who have kept improving the program. We also appreciate the compassion, patience and guidance of Dr. Mendy Mays along with her consistent positive and motivating words throughout this process. Finally, we would especially like to thank our families for their sacrifices throughout this process. We would not be completing this degree without their love and support.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is the core of the capstone?

Introduction

“Mr. Kidwell, your school lost 9 percentile points in this testing cycle; what are you going to do about it?” This statement prompted Laurel Elementary School to begin the transition from being classified as a Persistently Low Achieving school to being classified as a ‘Distinguished School’ and helped usher in district level reform to help other lower achieving schools become better.

Every member of the school district plays a role in student success: from the school bus driver, who for many students would be the first and last face of the school district they see, to the cafeteria workers, who provide the only meals some of our students receive; from the instructional aide, who works tirelessly with students to help them reach their benchmarks, to the Director of Facilities, who ensures a safe environment for the students to learn in; from the Director of Special Education, who makes sure that students are receiving the services and assistance they are entitled to, to the Instructional Supervisor, who provides a rigorous and relevant curriculum that will help meet the needs of an ever changing educational setting; from The Director of Pupil Personnel, who tracks and monitors student attendance, to the Superintendent, who oversees the entire process and makes decisions designed to benefit students.

Our students come in contact with a variety of individuals who impact their educational success on a daily basis. In Lewis County Schools, the district staff is

continually challenged to be in the trenches, to not lose sight of the day to day or the expectations we have of our teachers and our students. The definition of that role can vary greatly from person to person at the district level, and the definition of the role district staff will/should take at the building level is not always clearly communicated or defined. The perception of the district staff's intent is not always well received or wanted at the school level, as the approaches that district level staff take to helping low performing schools initiate change can also vary from school to school and from district to district, while the reason for schools being low performing continues to be debated.

The core of this capstone focuses on the relationship that district level administration has at the school level and how district staff can work at the school level to help initiate change and create a culture of open communication, trust, hard work and dedication between building level staff and the district office to help low performing schools achieve success under Kentucky testing and accountability practices.

As Kentucky education continues to focus more and more on standardized testing results, with focus on assessments such as KPrep, End of Course (EOC), and College and Career Readiness (CCR), focus on supporting, nurturing, and common sense approaches to education can sometimes be lost. 'Teaching to the test' is replacing good teaching practices with 'drill n' kill' and rote learning. A five-year University of Maryland study found that teaching to the test for the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was actually hurting higher level teaching (Jacobs, 2007). In

order to improve a school that is in decline, district staff must remain positive and show support to the school level staff instead of simply drilling students with testing and testing procedures.

Strauss (2010) states that by taking a deep serious look at the entire culture and climate of a school, the activities and functions of not only what the teachers are doing in their classrooms but also how staff are addressing extra-curricular activities, morale, creativity, and a variety of other important skills that cannot be measured by standardized testing. As educators, we know that standardized testing is not the end all be all for our students. We know that it is important for our students to be well rounded, productive, socially accepted community members.

As a part of the entire capstone process, the district staff participated in mentoring activities with students at the three schools to help reinforce that the culture and climate of the school are important aspects to the improvement of accountability procedures. Over the course of the mentoring process, the district staff developed trusting and meaningful relationships with the students and later proctored the test for many of those same students, serving as readers and scribes. The amount of effort put forth by these students increased in large part because of the establishment of the relationship developed through the mentoring program.

Impact of Central Office Staff

How do we create a system of support for our professionals in the field who feel the pressure and stress of poor performance on state mandated assessments? Furthermore, once we get that system of support created, how do we create a vibrant

educational culture where teachers, students, staff, and administrators facilitate their own culture for learning while meeting the demands of student assessment and the professional growth expected of all educators?

The process of district staff serving as coaches required the district staff to serve in a capacity of motivators and encouragers. The process and approach for being a motivator and encourager in the school requires a positive working relationship among district and building level staff. As motivators and encouragers, district staff can then analyze and assist low performing schools in a process similar to an action research project. The district staff must assess the current status of the school based on current practices and the most recent data available. A plan must then be put in place that builds on the current strengths of the school and addresses any gaps that have been identified after the assessment. Constant and consistent monitoring occurs to determine the impact of the strategies and to track the progress towards the goal. Finally, the plan is revised based on the findings of the monitoring and current information. These steps are executed in conjunction with the school level principal being the active leader in this process and the district staff supporting the process.

Statement of the Problem

Analyses were conducted to determine the impact of district staff as improvement coaches and whether or not there are perceived improvements in school culture and climate therefore impacting student success with the added assistance. This research will take a look at TELL KY survey results, support the

implementation of programs and procedures through the utilization of district staff as improvement coaches, and then monitor and analyze results after a period of implementation using a TELL KY-like survey administered to teachers and staff. The TELL KY survey was used because it is a valid and reliable survey that is administered by the State Department of Education and covers a wide variety of issues relating to the educational process that could have the potential to impact student success. Not only is it a valid and reliable survey, but it also provides information about areas in which we, as district staff, can go into a school and provide direct support and services to help improve conditions that do not score well. The activities that the district staff participated in included: RTI pull-out groups, implementation of new programs for student assistance, mentoring sessions for principal and assistant principal, maintenance and upkeep of building, promoting the school within the community and the district, acquisition of resources for the school, and data analysis and planning.

Purpose

The 2011-2012 school year was a difficult year for many of the schools in our district, as our entire school district fell in the 11th percentile according to state KPrep testing results provided by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). Individual school results at the elementary level fell further than the district wide 'Needs Improvement' classification received for scoring in the 11th percentile statewide.

The high school students at our Career and Technical Center (CTC) were also brought to attention during this process. As the district identified gaps in our system, we discovered a need for focused strategies for the students and staff at our CTC that would help Lewis County graduates be competitive in workforce and postsecondary endeavors. The 2011-2012 school year data showed that only 30% of our high school graduates obtained the status of “College and/or Career Ready (CCR).” CCR, as presented in Figure 1, is determined by the students’ success on the ACT, the Kentucky Occupational Skills Standards Assessment, Work Keys Assessment, or an Industry Certificate as recognized by the state.

College and Career Readiness for All				
<u>College Ready</u> (1 Point) A student must meet benchmarks on one of the following:	<u>Career Ready</u> (1 Point) A student must meet benchmarks on one from <u>each</u> of the following columns:		<u>College & Career Ready</u> (1.5 Points) A student must meet benchmarks on one from <u>each</u> of the following columns:	
ACT or COMPASS or KYOTE	Career Ready Academic	Career Ready Technical	College Ready Academic	Career Ready Technical
	ASVAB or WorkKeys	KOSSA or Industry Certificate	ACT or COMPASS or KYOTE	KOSSA or Industry Certificate

Figure 1: College and Career Readiness for All

Source: Kentucky Department of Education (2016)

Meetings were held with principals and district staff to discuss, analyze, and develop a game plan after data was released from the Department of Education. Principals met with other elementary principals to discuss areas of strengths and

weaknesses. Principals also met with the instructional supervisor and the superintendent to discuss a “how to” approach to help improve test scores at the school level. As these conversations were taking place in schools across the Lewis County, the conversation at the district level among district staff turned to implementing a method of assistance to the low performing schools that would focus on 4 major components: district office staff, principal and teacher(s) going on a site visit to a high performing school; focus on growth mindset; district office staff focus on developing low performing students; district office focus on being visible in the building with encouraging interactions.

As a result, the purpose of the capstone project became clear. The capstone project would focus on two major areas. The first was determining what district level staff did or helped implement at our elementary schools from the 2011-2012 school year through the 2015-2016 school year that helped them see success as defined by the KPrep state assessment (moving out of a classification of ‘needs improvement’). The second was determining what we are currently doing at our CTC and how is it different from what we did at our elementary schools to help them achieve higher performance ratings based on the state assessment and accountability system, and then determining how we can be proactive rather than reactive at our CTC to help students graduate Lewis County High School to be competitive with graduates from across the state.

Mission Statement of Lewis County Schools. The 2010-12 Lewis County District Comprehensive Improvement Plan will focus heavily on two areas of need

derived from our annual district/school data analysis process. Our first priority is to continue working with the alignment of our curriculum with Descartes and College Readiness Standards as well as new core standards once the state adopts them. This is an on-going process that will take several years to complete. The components for improvement in curriculum include: curriculum alignment, mapping, pacing guides, standard deconstruction, essential vocabulary identification and unit development. Standards-based unit refinement will be based on analysis of student work from classroom assignments and common assessments as well as state and nationally-normed assessments. This process will be supported and monitored at the district level, with continuous feedback from administrators, teachers, students and parents to determine effectiveness.

Our second major objective will be the improvement of pedagogy—improving teacher effectiveness in every classroom so that a minimum of 80% of students will perform to grade level standards across subject areas and make one year's academic growth each year through core instruction. Our work will support the improvement of content knowledge, lesson planning, lesson delivery, questioning techniques, assessment practices, and rigor/relevance to develop 21st century skills. Unit development, effective teaching strategies and the analysis of student work to plan for instruction will continue to be a large part of the systemic improvement process. A second component of this instructional initiative is the implementation of an effective and comprehensive system of evidence-based interventions. Students

performing below or well above grade level will receive additional instruction tailored to their specific needs as evidenced by reliable and valid assessment data.

Professional Development for all staff will be prescriptive in nature like our system of interventions for students. In light of technological advances available for the education of all students, the district is committed to provide ongoing professional development opportunities to advance and enhance effective integration and the use of educational technology.

Research Questions

- 1) What are we currently doing in our schools that has helped them see success?
- 2) What can we do at our schools to help them see success?

Review of Literature

Improving Low Performing Schools

In order for Lewis County Schools to compete academically on state mandated assessments, such as KPrep, we must understand what low performing schools are, and the perception of those schools and the improvement process. A variety of factors influence performance including culture, relationships within the building and from the building to the district office, resources available to the school, training provided to the staff, and external influences can also impact a schools performance including the socioeconomic status of the community and parental involvement.

Ryan, Matheson, and Morgenthau (2003) found that instead of creating the new equitable, academic environment, whereby all students must be given the same

opportunity to learn with NCLB, the opposite has occurred to perpetuate the learning environment it was mandated to stop. In order to combat this, Senate Bill 1 (2009) brought widespread changes for educational testing and procedures, including a changes at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Gap, Growth, and Achievement, as well as Program Review, drive test scores for our elementary schools, while at the middle school level, we factor in CCR, and at the high school we also include graduation rate to identify a total score for our schools.

Zhao (2009) found it is highly unlikely that increased curriculum requirements will have any effect on academic achievement, including reducing dropout rates and lessening the achievement gap. Simply increasing academic requirements and stating what students must know is not enough to ensure positive outcomes. The NCLB 2014 date for the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) of 100% pass rate by all students, which has been branded as an impossible goal, has been eliminated. Now we seek to ensure that our students achieve CCR upon high school graduation. With new changes came new requirements for determining what it meant to be a Proficient or Distinguished school for elementary, middle and high schools or CCR at the high school level.

Unfortunately, the reform initiatives come from the many educational policies set by state and federal mandates that use test scores to determine whether a school is performing to the appropriate levels. The tests scores are then used in the media as a way to say which schools are not performing to the levels of other schools.

From the media reports the public believes poor teacher performance is the reason, therefore causing a loss of respect for teacher's work (Edmondson, 2001).

The need for local level school reform initiatives becomes obvious for most school districts to handle the many state and federal mandates that occur. It is important to stay positive and informed about the true purpose of the educational process. Murphy and Myer (2008) concluded that “successful turnaround schools almost always have good, if not exceptional principals. As a common strand across successful school turnarounds, leadership is crucial. The principal sets the turnaround agenda, while leading teachers, involving the community, and building general capacity” (p.321). Throughout the process, the focus is not about successful leadership, but rather those qualities that the leadership possesses and passes on to the rest of the school that leads the turnaround process. Many of these qualities that a leader possesses and passes on to the school are based on difficult to measure traits such as compassion, empathy, persistence, honesty, integrity and creativity.

When a school performs low, attention is focused on the teachers and in many cases what they are not doing in their classrooms. Through this process, at low performing schools, according to Leithwood, Harris, and Strauss (2010), we depend on those teachers to lead the changes that were identified as the reason the schools needed a turnaround in the first place. However, it is those qualities that the leader possesses which helps make the transition take place.

The Need for Professional Development and Support from District Staff

“What a teacher knows and does are the strongest factors influencing student success” (Killion, 2006, p. 4). In order to help low performing schools perform better, teachers and staff require adequate training and support from the district level. Since teachers and principals are the most important aspect of change in a school, then positive support of the building level staff should result in improved staff attitudes and improved test scores. Poglinco and Bach (2005) concluded that assistance for our schools needs to be ongoing, embedded, and focused on academic content. Joyce and Showers (1996) found that an effective resource for teacher development was “modeling in the classroom and practice under simulated conditions in the classroom combined with feedback.” (p. 16). Research conducted by Vanerburg and Stephens (2009) draws the conclusion that teachers who were assisted by district staff or principals implemented a variety of strategies and techniques and utilized best-practices more often than those teachers who did not receive that assistance.

The Importance of the Perception of School Leaders and School Success

When looking at factors that influence achievement in low performing schools, there are multiple approaches that one might take, but looking at leadership usually comes first.

It turns out that leadership not only matters: it is second only to teaching among school-related factors in its impact on student learning, according to the evidence compiled and analyzed by the authors. And, say the authors, the impact of leadership tends to be greatest in schools where the learning needs

of students are most acute. We need to be developing leaders with large repertoires of practices and the capacity to choose from that repertoire as needed, not leaders trained in the delivery of one “ideal” set of practices. (Leithwood, 2004, p. 68)

Leaders are often times thought of as managers, going through the process of daily tasks and check off lists. In order to truly build capacity in the school, school leaders need to build trust among the staff. When our teachers trust the school administration, they teach with a renewed interest.

You cannot do this without a dedicated, highly competent teacher force – teachers in numbers, working together for the continuous betterment of the schools. And you cannot get teachers working like this without leaders at all levels guiding and supporting the process. The principal’s role is pivotal in this equation. (Fullan, 2003, p. 5)

Pech (2009) along with Bryk and Schneider (2002) explained in their works that employees were more cooperative and true in actions and behaviors when established levels of trust is maintained between themselves and their supervisors. Building healthy trusting relationships between school administrators at all levels and the staff in the school is a resource that can help bridge the gap to help low performing schools begin the process of improving achievement. When trust is established and teachers feel a sense of buy in and that their input is valued and appreciated, it can directly impact the culture and climate of the school and can

additionally help increase student achievement, according to Martin (1998), Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2000), and Johnston & Venable (1986).

Attitudes Toward Central Office Staff and Their Roles

The role of Central Office Staff varies from district to district. In our district, there has been much discussion about turf and responsibilities. All of us have been told that we are to support principals and student achievement. We have also been told to take care of our domain.

The empirical linkages between district-level policies and actions and actual changes at the classroom level, however, are more hypothetically than empirically demonstrated. The case for impact on student learning outcomes is correlation but stronger than the case for impact on instructional activities in the classroom. If test results show significant widespread gains in student results temporally associated with district reform plans, if these trends are generalized across all or most schools, and if the performance gaps between previous groups of low and high performing students and schools are seen to be diminishing over time, the argument is made that district reform efforts are having a positive impact on student learning. The empirical links between district policies and the actions of district leaders to teachers' activities in the classroom and from there to gains in student learning at the classroom and school levels, however, remain vague. (Leithwood, 2004, p. 45)

Since research shows that district level policies and actions tend to have little impact on improving student learning, we must move the district level staff out into

the classrooms in a positive step by step way. "School districts can most successfully promote student achievement by connecting key reform elements such as curriculum standards, human-capital strategies, intervention supports, performance management and accountability standards, and strong relationships with internal and external school system members." (Zavadsky, 2013, p. 1).

The Importance of Career and Technical Education Teacher Support

According to ACT, test scores in the Annual College-Readiness Report indicated that only 25% of high school students nationally who took the ACT in 2011 were considered college-ready on all four college readiness benchmarks (ACT, 2011). ACT researchers studied job requirements, which they then cross-referenced against an ACT job skills assessment system. They then mapped the findings onto ACT's college-readiness standards and concluded that the readiness requirements for both CCR were substantively comparable (ACT, 2011).

However, according to college readiness researchers, the federal government's one-size-fits-all college-readiness agenda has resulted in students who drop out of high school or in students who graduate but are not academically prepared or college-ready, as seen with NCLB school reform initiatives and the criticism of the fact that educational achievement has not significantly improved (U. S. Department of Education, 2006).

With a push towards CCR, school districts began trying to determine the best way to ensure that students were on track to become CCR. In 2012, Kentucky followed suite with Senate Bill 38 that calls for the strengthening of Career and

Technical Education (CTE) programs by utilizing career pathways to ensure that students were taking the necessary courses to complete a career major in CTE. In many area schools, there tends to be a separation of academic and occupational majors.

Throughout the years, many have wondered if we are truly preparing our high school graduates for the work that awaits them. This dramatically shifting set of expectations signaled the end to the gap between vocational studies and college preparation classes. In the last few decades, vocational education has been transformed from training students for relatively low-skilled occupations to educating students for higher-skilled careers that have greater opportunities for advancement. These changes have been reflected in a change of terminology, such as the addition of CCR.

Simply increasing academic requirements and stating what students must know is not enough to ensure positive outcomes. The research suggests that CCR is important to the successful transition of our students into the postsecondary world. Not only do we need to have our elementary schools performing at high levels for student success, we must take this same process to our high school levels to make sure our students are competitive in the 21st Century.

Motivation, Morale and the Brain

Many authors have focused on motivation in different ways but Blanchard (2010) takes a servant leadership approach. Our project wants to instill a servant

leadership approach by central office staff. The top three points made by Blanchard are the power of vision, serving customers at a higher level, and empowerment is the key. Blanchard states, "Leadership is about going somewhere. If you and your people don't know where you are going, your leadership doesn't matter" (p. 17). This really captures the idea of vision and making the visits to high performing schools for our principals to see. It also reinforces the ideas of being visible and positive.

Instead of answering to top management, in a high performing organization frontline employees take the lead in situations and are able to make decisions to help serve customers (Blanchard, 2010). The responsibility to serve customers is on the frontline employees. The responsibility to serve the employees falls on the top management to help them support the service to the customers. It makes you rethink about secretaries and the importance they play with their tone and body language when dealing with parents and community. The same is true with teachers and aides in working with students. The frontline people are by far the most important staff. So if the central office staff can model to the principal, and the principal models to the frontline staff, the result should be a high performing organization.

Middleton and Pettit focused on these ideas with their list of "29 Ways to Wow Your Parents and Your Administrators!" (Middleton, 2007) that models the ICARE elements listed in *Leading at a Higher Level* (Blanchard, 2010). Blanchard (2010) identifies empowerment as giving people the power to make decisions. If frontline employees are given this power then they are better able to serve the customers. The chapter continually refers to "releasing" the power of the employees.

Unleashing their knowledge, experience and motivation is the idea of this empowerment, but the fault is the idea of staff possibly taking it too far. Employees must take on responsibility when they take this empowerment from the top management, but with this responsibility, their sense of fulfillment increases and the performance of the organization improves.

Abraham Maslow (1943) was specific in his research “A Theory of Human Motivation,” that basic needs must be met before students can move into the level of actualization that we expect students to achieve in school. Principals and teachers must meet the basic needs as well to advance to actualization. Maslow specifically states humans must have needs met concerning food, water and excretion before the advancement to the higher levels of the pyramid, such as problem solving.

As Maslow (1954) continued with his research and produced the paper “Motivation and Personality,” it became clear he still believed in the hierarchy of needs from his prior works. Maslow expressed his opinion that only a tiny percentage actually achieved the highest level. Therefore, central office staff remaining positive and friendly with interactions at schools may reduce stress and improve psychomotor performance.

Decisions often are made under stress. For instance, anticipating a hectic day at work may influence one’s willingness to risk speeding through a yellow light on the way to the office. Feeling stressed may also induce a bias in weighing positive over negative aspects of a job offer more heavily. The laboratory studies reviewed here provide evidence that stress affects decision

making, highlighting the need for additional work to better understand the nature of these effects and their brain mechanisms. (Mather, 2012, p.5).

If central office staff does not help or stay positive while at the school level, then it is going to help create decisions that are made under stress like Mather (2012) discussed.

Schools. Laurel Elementary is the smallest of six schools in the Lewis County School District. Our school has a total enrollment of 99 students in Grades K-6, and a preschool program for three and four-year olds. Our average attendance is 95.6% with a free/reduced population of 67%. We are a modern facility that serves the needs of our entire community. Academic excellence and student success are our priorities. Our students are provided with a rigorous curriculum so that they are college and career ready and prepared for life by the time they graduate. Daily instruction and assessments reflect our commitment to assist all students in meeting or exceeding state/national standards.

Garrison Elementary School is located near the banks of the Ohio River and bordered by the green eddy's of Kinniconick Creek. It is one of four elementary schools in the Lewis County School system. Our neighbors to the east are Greenup County and the state of Ohio. Because of this geographical location, a significant percentage of our students are transient, moving from county to county and state to state. This creates a challenge for our school to achieve its mission of educating all students through the implementation of a rigorous curriculum that promotes high levels of academic performance and builds positive growth in social/emotional

behaviors and attitudes. Our staff strives to instill in each student the need to achieve, to believe they can learn, and that what they are learning is useful, relevant and meaningful. Our total enrollment is 317 students. Our annual attendance rate is 92.9% and we have a free/reduced population of 86%. The teacher to student ratio is 16:1.

The Foster Meade Career and Technical Center is a locally operated vocational center on the campus of Lewis County High School. FMCTC has 10 teachers who offer courses to high school students in the program areas of: Welding, Health Science, Project Lead the Way, Carpentry, Agriculture, Business, and Computer Aided Drafting. The center offers a variety of dual credit courses that will transfer to many local colleges and universities. Foster Meade Career and Technical Center helps the Lewis County High School reach a College and Career Ready rate of 90% by preparing students in workplace ready skills.

Who is the capstone meant to impact?

Context

The capstone is designed to help teachers, school level administrators, and district level administration build trusting relationships to impact student success. The professional learning series will be designed to target building and district level administrators to help them work together to best utilize resources and talents to help make schools successful. The intent is for the information and data found to be used professional development on the local, state and national levels for any district that wants to better utilize central office staff.

The Lewis County School District is located in one of the poorest areas of Kentucky. The 2,200 student district consists of 6 schools, 337 staff and is by far the largest employer in the county. The county continues to lose population and jobs. Multiple factories and businesses have shut down, and the majority of the population falls under poverty status. According to the U.S. Census website, Lewis County families with children under the age of 5 have a 60% chance of falling under the poverty level. For families with no husband present and children under the age of 5, that statistic jumps to an 87% chance of falling under the poverty level. Looking at all household incomes for the county compared to the U.S. mean income per household of \$79,263, over 82% of the Lewis County households fall below the average American income.

Table 1

Lewis County Income and Benefits Based on US Census Website
(Percentage of household for income range)

INCOME AND BENEFITS (IN 2015 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)	
Total households	5,373
Less than \$10,000	16.10%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	9.40%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	17.40%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	14.90%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	12.00%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	12.20%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	9.60%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	7.70%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0.20%
\$200,000 or more	0.50%

*table made from U.S. Census website information

As seen in information from Table 2, most of Lewis County household fall below average, but we do have households that fall in the highest category. Since we have under 5,400 households and only 0.05% make above the \$200,000 category, that number includes only 27 households in the entire 495 square mile county. Another problem experienced by our county is the fact that single mothers fall much more frequently under the poverty level.

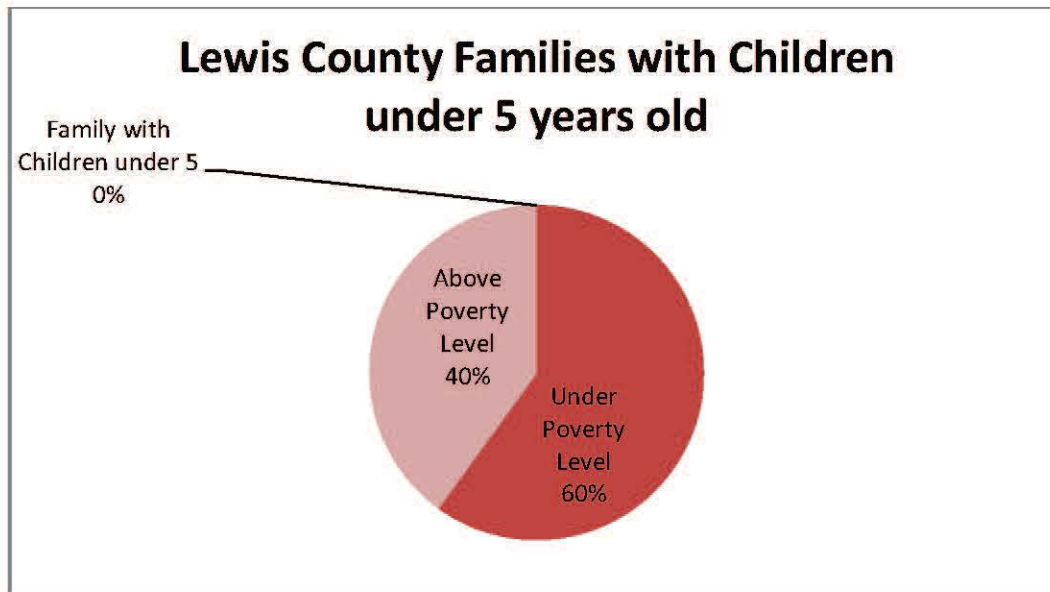


Figure 2

*Figure created with US Census website information

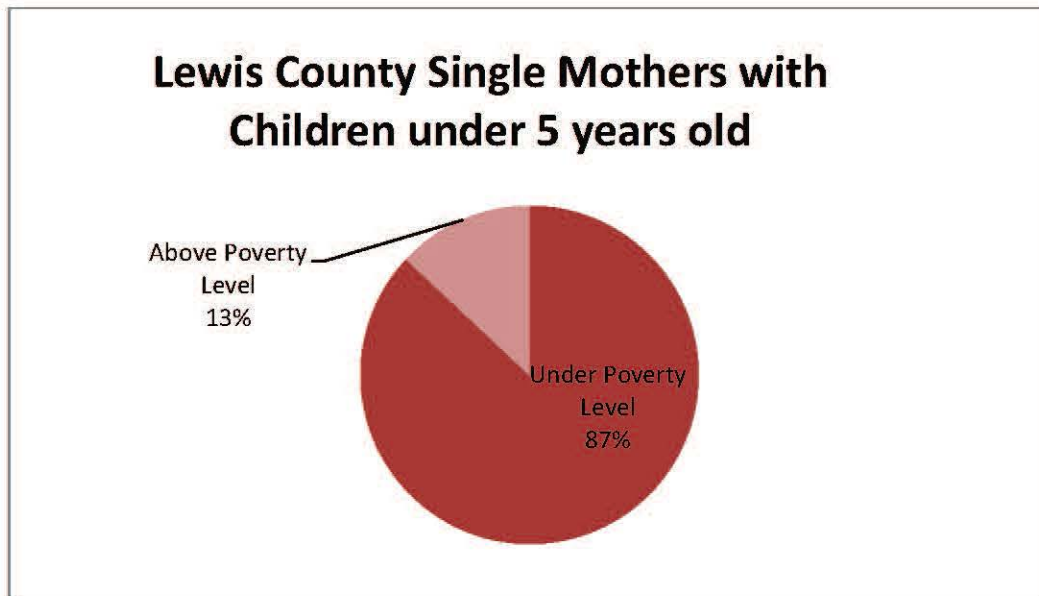


Figure 3

*Figure created with US Census website information

As with many rural, poor counties, Lewis County has very few households that make substantial income. Also, as seen on the US Census website, our county has little diversity with the population consisting of 99% Caucasian. This study could be utilized by the many rural, poverty stricken counties across the U.S. As budget cuts and the need for fewer staff in small rural school districts increase, the need for central office staff to have a positive impact becomes even more important.

Who is impacted?

The project started out with the intent of just impacting Laurel elementary students and staff, but the project grew to the other schools of Garrison Elementary and the Foster Meade Career and Technical Center. After seeing the positive results experienced by Laurel Elementary jumping from 9th percentile to 91st percentile,

other district schools began implementing some of the ideas from the project. All three schools utilized site visits, school planning with central office staff, individual student work with central office staff, and constant monitoring of achievement progress. Gradually, other schools in the district utilized similar ideas. For example, Tollesboro's principal implemented the site visit, growth mindset ideas, and central office staff's help. Our high school probably utilized central office support the most of any school while also monitoring student achievement. All schools scored Distinguished at some point in time, with the exception of Garrison Elementary. However, that school showed the greatest growth it had ever recorded, even though a large percentage (17%) of proficient and distinguished students moved to another school in our district. Those students, had they stayed, would have made Garrison scores even higher.

How was the capstone project implemented?

Introduction

The project began with our Laurel Elementary principal requiring help in getting his students to perform higher than the 9th percentile on the KPrep test. He requested assistance from two central office staff members in revitalizing his school. The project began with the question, "What can district level staff do/help implement at our elementary schools from the 2011-2012 school year through the 2015-2016 school year to help them see success as defined by the KPrep state assessment, thus moving out of a classification of 'needs improvement'?" The project began by central office staff coordinating a site visit with the 2nd highest scoring elementary

school in the state, Star Elementary in Carter County. The principal at Star Elementary allowed our principal and central office staff to visit and discuss successful strategies implemented at Star Elementary. Site visits and walk-throughs have been a key element for successful reform for many years. Some of the notes taken from the multiple site visits are listed below:

Observations

1. Passion for kids and learning
2. Impressive / high level student work
3. Individuality of student work / student expression
4. Students said they felt safe
5. Students showed a lot of excitement for learning
6. Very good student engagement
7. Great use of terminology and high level vocabulary
8. Students knew what was going on in the classroom
9. Students knew the importance of the walkthrough
10. Students said they were given models and comments which helped them to do well and improve
11. Students were in class and ready to go from the beginning
12. Student said she was given the opportunity to learn
13. Students knew how what they were learning now will help them in the future
14. Motivational / high level posters
15. Students excited about an upcoming project
16. Students were very excited / enthusiastic about many things that were going on
17. Integration of subject matter in projects

Catalysts for Improvement

1. Look at project based learning – ways to get and keep kids involved
2. Find a way to build writing instruction into the scoring guide
3. Feedback and goal setting
4. Offer students more choices / pride and ownership
5. Performance levels (Bloom's Taxonomy)
6. Higher expectations in student work
7. Real learning is fun
8. Through coaching, strengthen our teams to get results

9. Continue transition activities – advertise these activities

These notes provided a basis for better discussion and planning in the projects with each school. In *Leading at a Higher Level* (Blanchard, 2010), Blanchard helps to understand how to develop a vision for each organization. Prior to arriving or beginning with a new vision, Blanchard suggests having never had a clear cut vision for any organization, school, district position or team. Leaders should always begin by using written surveys, emails, interviews and one on one conversation with the people involved to develop and form the vision. Blanchard says, "The organization needs to put in place mechanisms to give others an opportunity to help shape the vision---to put their thumbprint on it" (Blanchard, 2010). The book describes developing a vision from input from the members of the organization. Most books focus on the leaders developing a sound vision, but do not word it like Blanchard of using input from the team. The site visits really allow for the vision to form just while observing a high performing school.

The project was then expanded to other schools. The Garrison Elementary principal and central office staff also went to Star Elementary the following year. The CTC principal and central office staff attended the state training with many other CTC principals from across the state. The two schools were then taken through a similar process as Laurel Elementary. The district staff assessed the current status of the school based on current practices and the most recent data available, which was KPrep for Garrison Elementary and state certification and CCR data for the CTC. A

plan was put in place that built on the current strengths of each school and addressed any gaps that have been identified after the assessment. Constant and consistent monitoring occurred to determine the impact of the strategies and to track the progress towards the goals set. A computer software was purchased for Garrison Elementary that monitored student progress, and central office staff delivered professional development to all staff for implementation. The CTC had regular meetings, at least 4 monthly, to specifically target students that had met CCR standards and their successful completion of certification tests. Students at Garrison Elementary were worked with in small group settings to help them meet KPrep goals, while students at CTC were also met with individually to help meet CCR and certification success. Finally, the plan was revised based on the findings of the monitoring and the current information. These steps are executed in conjunction with the school level principal being the active leader in this process and the district staff supporting the process. Again, the notes taken during the site visits became the focus for planning the plans for each school.

What data did you collect?

For the purpose of this project, data was collected relating to survey data, achievement data, behavior data and attendance. TELL KY Survey data related to teacher perceptions regarding school/district Administration and student achievement was gathered from Garrison Elementary, Laurel Elementary, and the Foster Meade Career and Technical Center. Survey data was analyzed at CTC, Garrison Elementary and Laurel Elementary. We looked to see if there is a positive correspondence in

survey responses after district administrators had been working in the schools to help student achievement.

The second portion of the data collected was analyzing achievement scores, practices and procedures that were put into place at Garrison Elementary and Laurel Elementary to help increase student achievement. We also looked at achievement scores and CCR scores at Foster Meade Career and Technical Center.

How did you select your subjects? What criteria did you use?

The study sample included three schools in the Lewis County School district, two of which that had been classified as 'Needs Improvement' under the new state testing and accountability system. The third school, our CTC, had high expectations placed early with ample support, but then almost all support was withdrawn even the removal of the principal's title to be supervisor only and halftime assistant high school principal. The three schools welcomed the added help from Central Office staff in planning for success for their schools.

The Lewis County School district is a K-12 school district on the Ohio River that serves approximately 2,249 students. 70.8% of the population qualifies for free/reduced lunch, although the entire school district receives free breakfast and lunch through the Community Eligibility Option. According to the 2014-2015 school report card, Lewis County scored in the 50th percentile and classifies as a 'Needs Improvement' school district. Since the state classified the entire district as 'Needs Improvement', it was made clear Central Office Staff needed to support our principals in making improvements.

Implementation: Utilizing District staff as school improvement coaches in the School Improvement Process

As the basis for Kentucky education continues to focus more and more on standardized testing procedures, we lose sight of supporting, nurturing, and common sense approaches to education. 'Teaching to the test' is replacing good teaching practices with 'drill n' kill' and rote learning. A five-year University of Maryland study completed in 2007 found some interesting information. Jacons (2007) found that "the pressure teachers were feeling to 'teach to the test'" since NCLB lead to "declines in teaching higher-order thinking, in the amount of time spent on complex assignments, and in the actual amount of high cognitive content in the curriculum." In order to improve a school that is in decline, we must address all issues in the education process, not just simply drill students with testing and testing procedures.

According to late education researcher Gerald W. Bracey, PhD, qualities that standardized tests cannot measure include "creativity, critical thinking, resilience, motivation, persistence, curiosity, endurance, reliability, enthusiasm, empathy, self-awareness, self-discipline, leadership, civic-mindedness, courage, compassion, resourcefulness, sense of beauty, sense of wonder, honesty, integrity." (Strauss). A deeply serious inspection of the entire culture and climate of a school, the activities and functions of not only what they are doing in their classrooms but also how they are addressing extracurricular activities, morale, creativity, and a variety of other important skills that cannot be measured by standardized testing is necessary for school improvement.

Throughout this process, a more important issue arose. As educators we know that standardized testing is not the end all be all for our students. We know that it is important for our students to be well rounded, socially accepted, and productive community members. How do we create a system of support for our professionals in the field that feel the pressure and stress of low performing standardized testing data? Furthermore, when we get that system of supports created, how do we use those to create a vibrant educational culture where teachers, students, staff, and administrators facilitate their own culture for learning while meeting the demands of a standardized testing system?

Data Collection Process

Data was collected by school administrators and central office staff throughout the project. Much of the data collected was from the Kentucky Department of Education's websites that reported TELL survey data and state test results. Unfortunately, TELL surveys are only given every two years, so written permission was obtained from 100% of staff at Garrison Elementary and the Foster Meade Career and Technical Center staff and the questions from the TELL survey were given to 100% of the staff. All staff members had completed the actual TELL survey at all 3 schools on all prior years as well. While a small turnover occurred with staff at the three schools during the project, the majority of staff remained the same at all schools.

Why were this capstone and related strategies selected?

The Lewis County School District experienced having the same superintendent for 18 years in a row. When he retired in 2015, our district went into a turbulent 15 months that saw 4 different superintendents. After the stability of the same person, everyone had to get accustomed to replacement after replacement. Schools still had the need for support and help to improve student achievement. The 2012-2013 school report card and the 2013-2014 school report card found that Laurel Elementary school performed in the 9th and 40th percentile, and was labeled a 'Needs Improvement' school. During the 2014-2015 testing cycle, Garrison Elementary school report card showed the school scored in the 29th percentile with a score of 54.3 on the KPrep index. This project helped bring support to schools as our long term superintendent was retiring and each new superintendent began their learning process of becoming our leader.

Our Consolidated District Improvement Plan called for a focus on improving all of our schools because of our low scores and the socioeconomic status of our district. Our instructional supervisor and superintendent produced the following consolidated plan regarding our data. We are a high-poverty district, with ranges from 66 to 81 percent across district schools. There is a district curriculum: every school uses the same pacing guides, textbooks, and other instructional resources, as well teachers having the same access to professional development and instructional coaching. All schools currently have over 80% of teachers with 4 or more years of experience. District-wide, teacher turnover has not been a major concern, although

there was greater than normal turnover at both LCMS and LCHS. For 15-16, we are a Proficient district. Two of our schools are distinguished. The turnover was 10% and 5% for them. Two of our schools are Proficient: turnover was 13% and 22% (the 22 reflects 1 teacher retirement, and we do not understand where the 13 came from). The remaining two schools are 10.7% and 4.4%, much the same as our distinguished schools.

With regard to experience, every school has 80% or more of its teachers with 4 or more years teaching in the field. Our data does not bear out any barriers or concerns regarding teacher turnover or experience level. We realize we may have some inequities; however, the data as requested does not bear it out. Our district's consolidated improvement plan was worked on by many district staff and coordinated by our superintendent and our instructional supervisor. The focus of our district plan was a push in Reading and Mathematics achievement. The difficult part of the plan was the implementation of the strategies and achievement of the goals. The focus of The Power of Positive was to effectively and positively implement ideas focused upon in the consolidated plan. A step by step plan was used to help principals work towards the district goals, beginning with site visits to high performing schools to finishing with direct help proctoring the state assessment. While the consolidated plan helped make ideas for improvement, the Power of Positive made plans for implementation.

Goal 1: Increase the averaged combined reading and math K-Prep scores for elementary, middle, and high school students from 36 to 68; 38 to 69.0, and 35 to 67.5 respectively by 2018-19

Measurable

Objective 1: Collaborate to increase the overall averaged combined reading and math scores for elementary, middle, and high school from 40.4 to 55.2; 44.4 to 56.6; and 47.9 to 54.5 percent proficient and distinguished by 05/26/2017 as measured by K-Prep.

Strategy 1: Math Curriculum and Instructional Support - Teachers will participate in professional learning in appropriate mathematics instructional practices. Groups of teachers will work with a consultant to practice high yield classroom strategies that improve student performance. The scheduling of the consultant's services will be based upon program/materials adoption and data.

Strategy 2: Core Program Effectiveness - A district team comprised of district leadership, school leadership and subject appropriate teachers from each content area will update, revise and refine pacing guides annually to be congruent with state standards. This process is ongoing; changes in standards, state testing, recommendations from consultants, etc. will change the update and revision timeline.

Goal 2: Increase the averaged combined reading and math proficiency ratings for all students in the non-duplicated gap group at all levels (elementary- high) from 28.2 to 64.1; 29.8 to 64.9; and 27.8 to 63.9; AND reduce novice at each level by 50% by 2019.

Measurable

Objective 1: Collaborate to increase the combined reading and math proficiency for all (in the non-duplicated gap group) at elementary, middle, and high from 36.1 to 46.5%; 32.4 to 49.0%; and 19.2 to 49.4% respectively, and reduce novice by no less than 10% across the board by 05/31/2017 as measured by K-Prep.

Strategy 1: Data analysis and Intervention - Using state test results, universal and diagnostic screeners, and assessments delivered at the local level, schools will identify areas for academic growth for all students. Schools shall provide appropriate, needs-based interventions, in addition to effective core instruction, on a regular basis. Student progress shall be monitored to determine efficacy of intervention and further instructional needs. For students above benchmark levels, rigorous and appropriate goals will be established in core instructional subjects; these student results will be measured

and monitored for growth the same as for students falling below benchmark.

Goal 3: All certified staff will participate in professional learning to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning, implement a variety of assessments, increase student engagement, and utilize data to direct student learning.

Measurable

Objective 1: Collaborate to identify and provide assistance to all personnel to implement any new initiatives aligned to Unbridled Learning and/or school and district needs by 05/31/2017 as measured by surveys, observation data, and student achievement.

Strategy 1: Job Embedded Professional Learning - Teachers will participate in professional learning in appropriate content-area curricula and instructional practices. Groups of teachers will work with each other or, if available, an instructional consultant to practice high yield classroom strategies that improve student attainment and performance.

Measurable

Objective 2: Collaborate to improve the learning environment at all schools in the district by fair and equitable distribution of material and human resources by 05/31/2017 as measured by stakeholder feedback (TELL Survey, PTO meetings, SBDM meetings, electronic communications, etc.).

Strategy 1: Parent, Student and Community Feedback - The superintendent, collaborating with schools throughout the district, will identify and create opportunities for students, parents, and community to provide feedback on teaching, learning, and a safe and productive learning environment. Stakeholders at all levels will work toward determining ways to communicate more effectively with parents, business and community.

Strategy 2: TELL Survey - Principals will analyze the results of working conditions surveys, then choose at least one area to improve upon to positively impact teaching and learning conditions at respective schools. Principals will report areas for improvement, and progress to superintendent.

Lewis County Schools elementary combined reading and math KPREP Data from 2014-2015 to 2015-16 respectively are: 33.1 to 40.4. Scores have fluctuated, and while we have seen an overall, net improvement, we have consistently been below the state average. Lewis County Schools middle school combined reading and math KPREP data from 2014-2015 to 2015-16 respectively are 39.9 and 44.4; middle school scores across the state have fluctuated while our middle school increases steadily; Lewis County Schools high school combined reading and math KPREP data from 2014-2015 to 15-16, respectively are 48.0 to 47.9; scores have consistently been below the state average until the 14-15 school year, and have dropped back below the state mean in 15-16.

K-Prep data indicates the Lewis County School District is below the state average in Reading and Math, across elementary and middle school level configurations and ranges, with the largest gap at the elementary level. KPREP assessment data for science, social studies, writing and language mechanics are similar in that our schools generally score below the state average across the board. Our schools have greater numbers of novice in all grades and across all subjects, and smaller percentages of distinguished students than the state averages (in 15-16, LCMS had fewer novice than state mean in language mechanics), and the high school had fewer novice in on-demand writing. Quality Core EOC tests in English, Algebra II, Biology and US History from 2011-12 to 2015-16, respectively were: English II- 39.2 (52.2); 50.6 (55.8), 36.9 (55.4); 60.6 (56.7) and 46.7(56.4); Algebra II- 36.4 (40.0), 28.0 (36.0), 16.8 (37.9), 35.3 (38.1)47.79(42.3); Biology-26.4(30.3), 22.5

(36.3), 20.3 (39.8), 29.6 (39.6); US History-20.3 (39.5), 34.9 (51.3), and 48.6 (58), and 51.2 (56.8) 53.4(59.1). Novice percentages have fluctuated over five years; in 2013-14 novice increased for all subject areas except US History, where it decreased by half. In 14-15, the percentage of students scoring novice reduced in English II, Algebra II and Biology; percentages of students scoring in the proficient or distinguished range increased in all subject areas. This trend of drastic novice reduction for English, however, was short lived; in 15-16 novice rose to 41.1. Algebra II scores, however, exceeded the state mean. Biology was not tested in 15-16 due to course sequence reconfiguration.

When was the capstone implemented?

The project was started in the fall of 2014 at Laurel Elementary. Central Office staff started with a site visit accompanying the principal to a high performing elementary school. The central office staff then worked throughout the school year 2014-15 with the staff and students. The next two schools were taken through the same process during the school year 2015-16. All schools started with site visits at the beginning of the school year in the months of July and August. The planning process with each school then proceeded through the months of August to October. The implementation of the plans then occurred from September through May at each school. The process of monitoring and changing the plans continued from November through May. Central office roles during this process included from success activities, such as serving snow cones, to academic focus of instructional activities, and even administering assessments.

Impact of capstone. The results are mixed on the impact of central office working with schools. The academic results consistently improved, but the results from the TELL survey lowered in many areas after working with the schools.

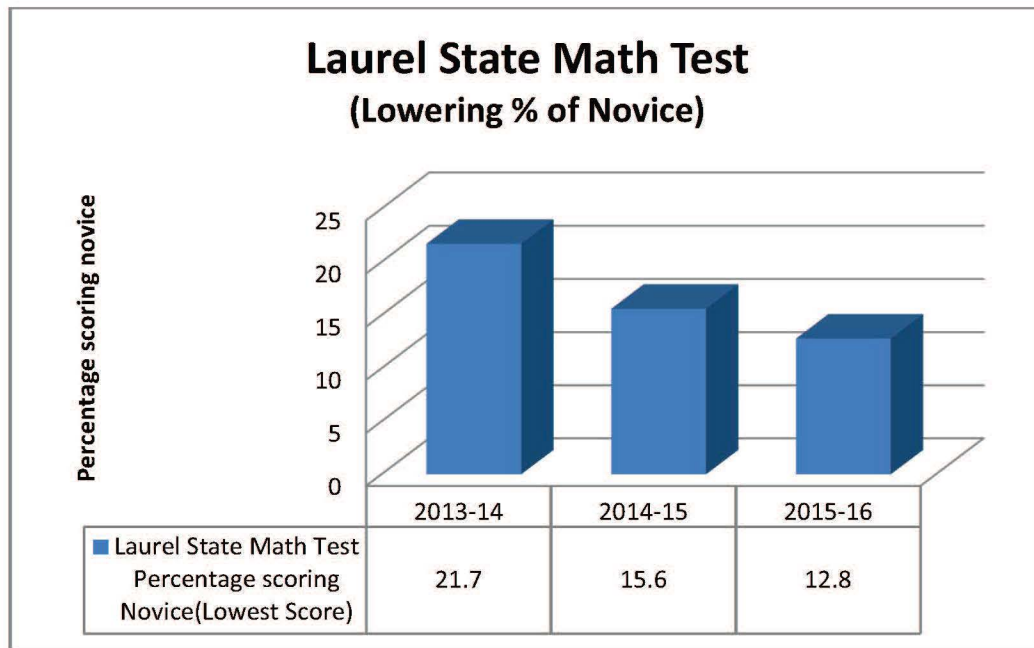


Figure 4

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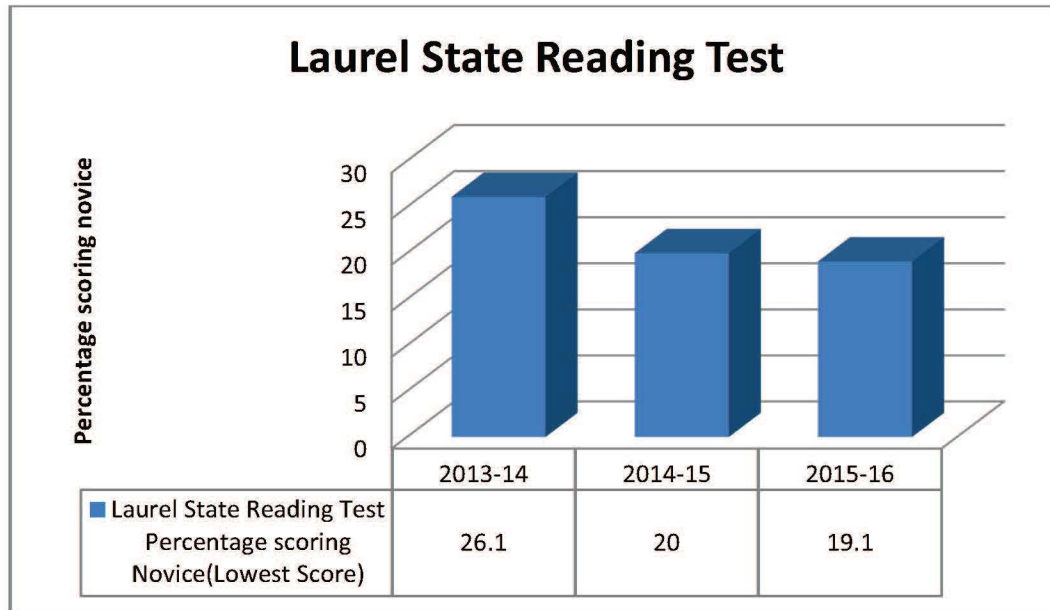


Figure 5

*Figure created with KDE report card website information

The main objective was to improve student achievement by reducing novice scores and moving students into the proficient/distinguished levels on the KPrep.

Figure 4 and Figure 5 show the improvement in lowering the number of students that scored at the lowest levels of the state testing. The highest performing students were also impacted as central office staff was directly involved in student activities.

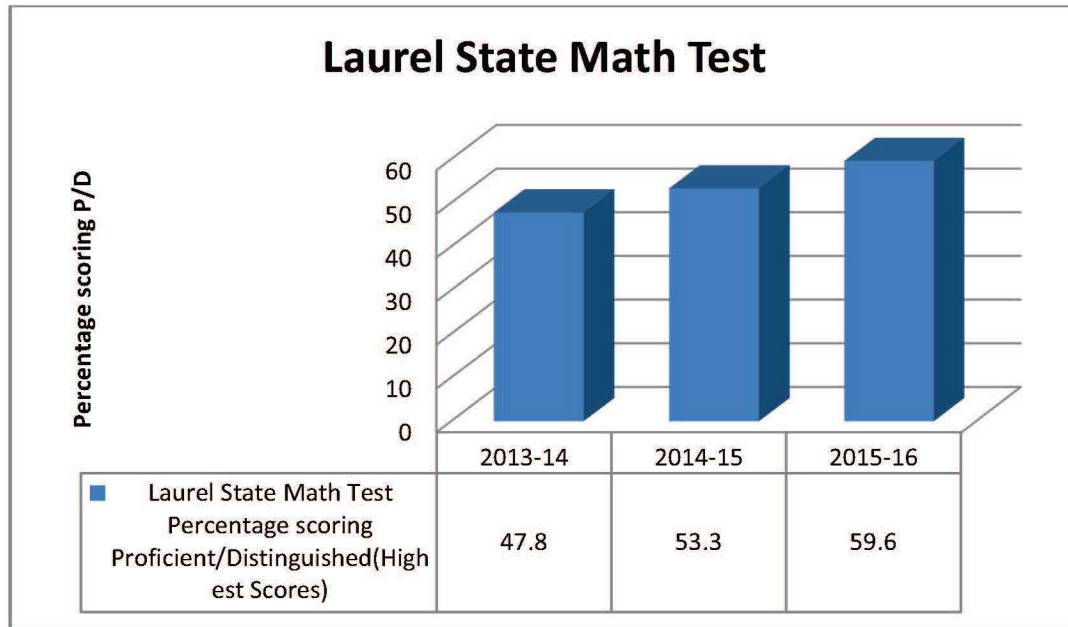


Figure 6

*Figure created with KDE report card website information

The subjects targeted by Central Office Staff were reading and mathematics. One central office member focused on Mathematics and the other focused on Reading and Writing. The students were instructed in small groups and large groups. The use of project based activities were the main focus at each school. Staff were exposed to growth mindset training as well. Site visits were utilized by all principals involved, and deliberate school planning was done by central office staff and principals.

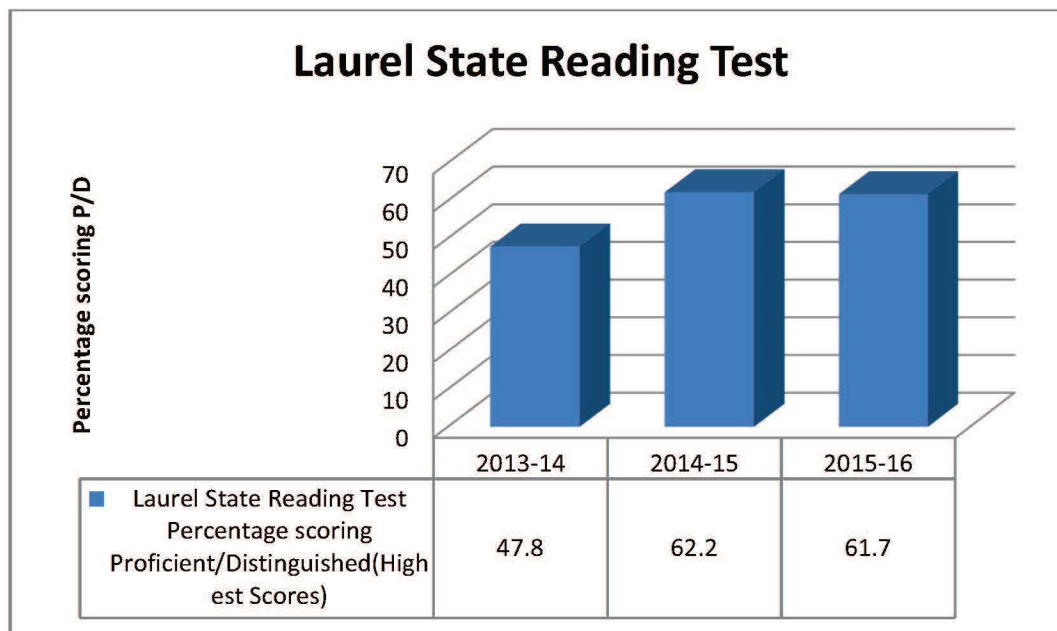


Figure 7

*Figure created with KDE report card website information

Laurel Elementary students made dramatic gains in students scoring at the top categories of Proficient and Distinguished in Reading the first year of completion of the project but only maintained improvement slightly when central office staff began focusing on the other two schools. The drop was not significant but a loss was experienced. This drop slightly reinforces that fact that central office positive presence has an impact of student achievement.

Further research would help reinforce that central office positive presence will increase student achievement results and lack of central office presence will negatively affect student achievement results.

Garrison Elementary fell from the 45th percentile to the 29th percentile and is also classified as a "needs improvement" school. 31.1% of the students scored

Proficient/Distinguished in Reading; 25.8 in Math; 49.1 in social studies; 33% in writing; and 39.8% in Language mechanics. The school received the entire 23% of the points possible for the program review which counted for the 14-15 school year towards the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) for the school, but will not count towards the AMO for the 15-16 school year, potentially creating an even greater challenge in reaching the AMO.

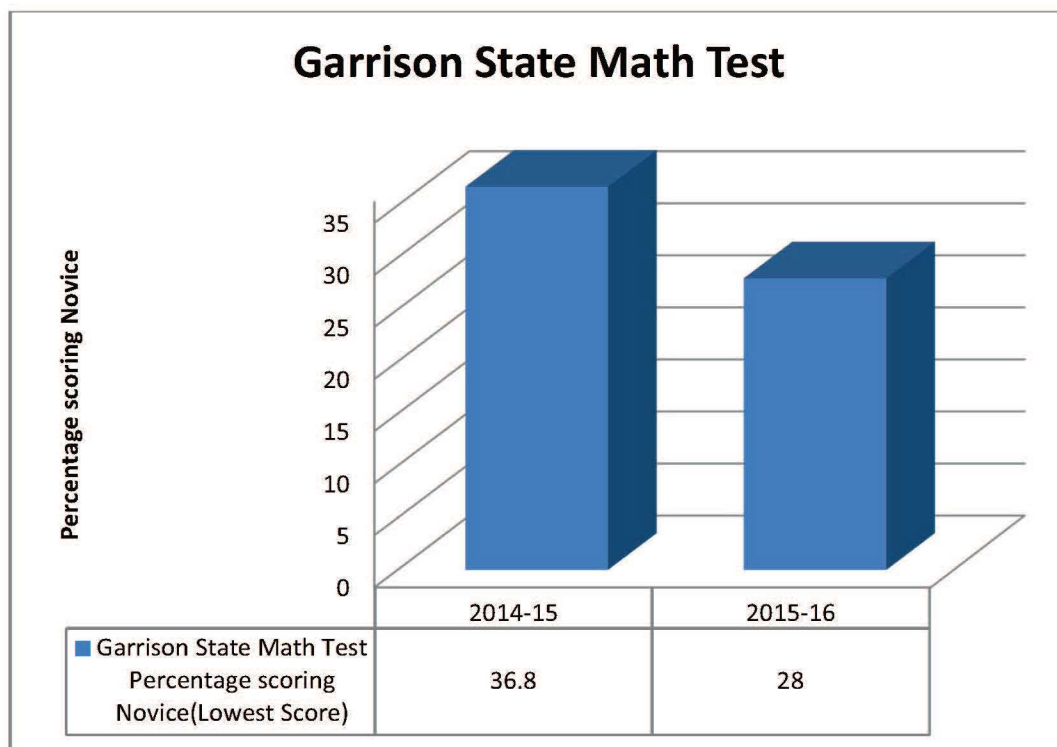


Figure 8

*Figure created with KDE report card website information

Figure 8 and Figure 9 show the improvement in lowering the number of kids that scored in the lowest category, novice, in both reading and mathematics. Figure 10 identifies the percentage of students that increased in Proficient and Distinguished

from the 2014-2015 testing cycle to the 2015-2016 testing cycle. The project had central office staff doing pull out programs at least 1 or 2 times weekly with targeted students as recommended by teachers. Many students made significant individual gains on state testing, and overall the school saw significantly less numbers in the novice category.

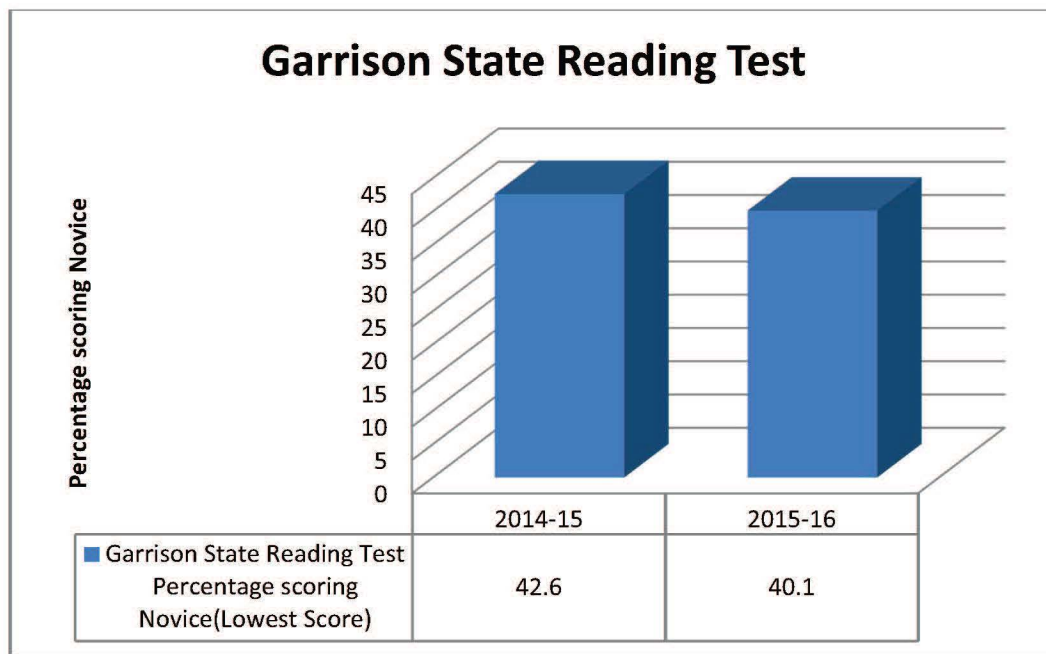


Figure 9

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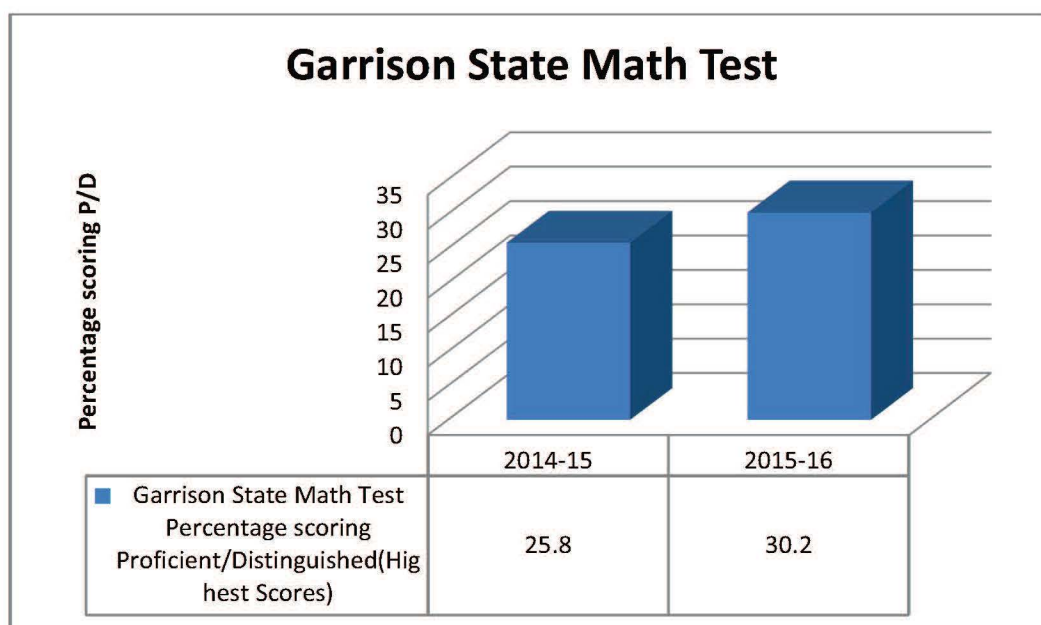


Figure 10

*Figure created with KDE report card website information

At the same time that novice students were being moved higher, other students that scored at the highest levels of Proficient and Distinguished climbed by almost 5%. The overall positive communication and intentional planning between Garrison administrators, teachers, staff and central office staff focused on raising students' performance to the maximum of their potential.

Similar results were seen at each school that went through the intentional planning and goal setting. Garrison Elementary goals were specifically focused on mathematics and reading results, and improving overall student behavior.

The Foster Meade Career and Technical Center is connected to Lewis County High School and is a locally operated vocational school. Before the project in the 2014-2015 school year 74.9% of our seniors were College and Career Ready with

bonus; 88.2% were College and Career Ready with bonus after the project in the 2015-2016 school year.

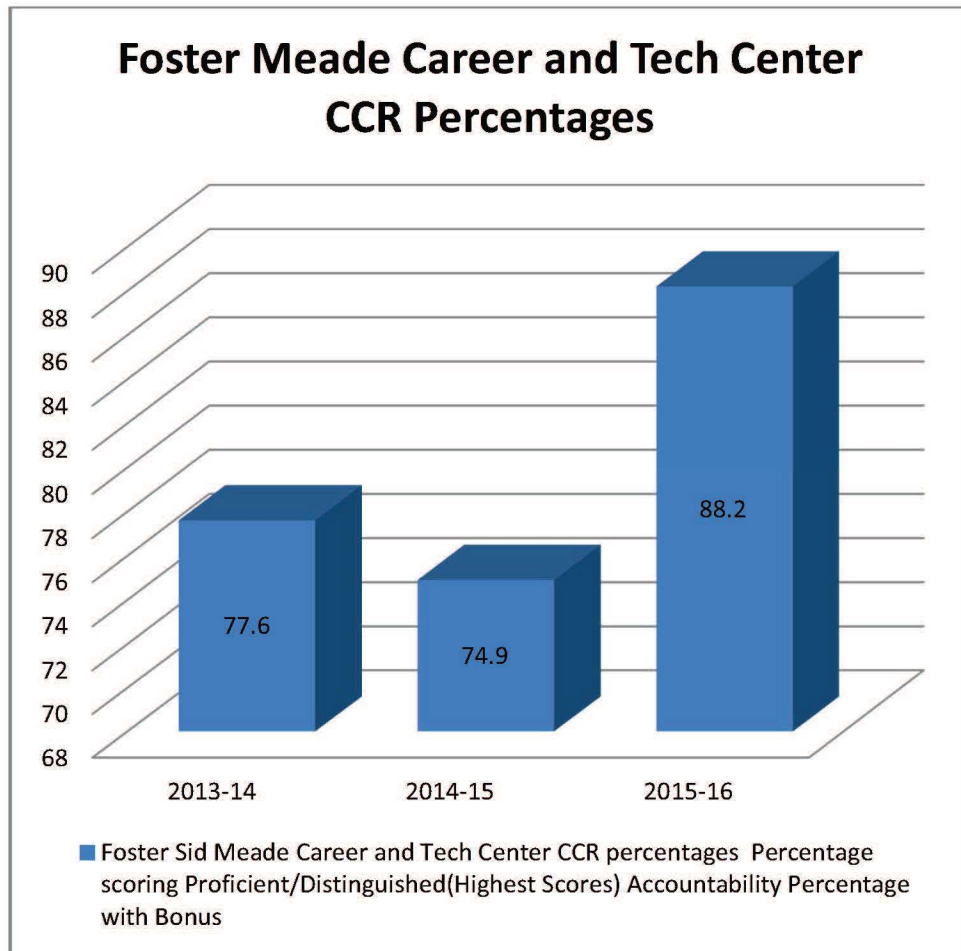


Figure 11

TELL Survey

While the student achievement went up dramatically at each school involved in the project, by looking at the before and after at each school's TELL survey results, the results were varied in the potential impact of central office staff on the opinions of the staff at each school. In looking at the before and after at each school's TELL

survey results, the results were varied in the potential impact of central office staff on the opinions of the staff at each school. The following results are from looking at the 23 TELL survey questions selected from the 2015 survey that 100% of the staff participated. In order to identify the data after the project was implemented, we obtained permission from 100% of the staff and they were asked to take survey near the end of the project of in Laurel Elementary' case we used the state released TELL survey results for both the before and after. It will be vital to obtain the 2017 TELL survey results in order to determine if the teacher perception increased overall as a result of the project.

The expectations of the project were that test scores would go up, but opinions shared on the TELL survey could go down because of the presence of supervisors being in the building more consistently. The selected survey questions focused on 8 different school related areas, ranging from Teacher Protected time, Facilities, Community, leadership (both teacher and administration), professional development, instructional practices and overall support. The results were expected to be varied depending upon what became the goals set by the staff at each school. Each school focused on slightly different goals resulting in slightly different uses of central office staff. Each question was broke down into 4 possible responses; Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree and Strongly Agree. Strongly disagree was given the value of 1, disagree given 2, agree given 3, and strongly agree was 4. The three schools were combined to produce the results in the tables that follow.

The first question from the TELL survey asked teachers to respond to the how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement, "Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students. The combined results showed little difference between the before and after of the project. Ironically, if looked at as individual schools, two schools actually had lower percentages in agreeing that their time was protected. While the third school, actually went from 4 out of 5 teachers responding that their time was protected to 100 % responding their time was protected.

Table 2

Use of Time

Item 1: Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	51	0 (0%)	7 (14%)	31 (61%)	13 (25%)	3.12	0.62
After	46	0 (0%)	5 (11%)	29 (63%)	12 (26%)	3.15	0.60

The combined results of the responses from Item 1, showed that the actual means and standard deviation showed no real significant difference when comparing before project responses to after project responses. The project appears to have little affect on the opinions of staff regarding how they feel about the time being protected to teach. Since the original results of their time being protected were relatively high to start, then it was positive that the project did not have a detrimental affect upon their attitudes regarding their time.

The next set of selected survey questions dealt with school facilities and resources. The focus of the questions were cleanliness, environment supporting learning, and internet reliability. The focus of the project was not to just clean but became major components at two of the schools. The opinions regarding school cleanliness dropped dramatically at two of the schools, which resulted in the drop from a mean response of 2.85 before project to just a 2.28 mean after the project. What seemed shocking about these results was the obvious improvement in cleanliness at one of the schools, but that school's responses dropped dramatically. A possible explanation was the increased focus on the need to improve the cleanliness of the school, brought the attention to the staff of how much the school needed improvement in the area of cleanliness and maintenance. This focus on the facilities should have also affected attitudes toward the physical environment supporting the teaching and learning, but the means remained relatively unchanged. While we did focus on software usage at one of the schools, question regarding reliability and speed of the internet connections remained relatively unchanged as well.

Table 3

School Facilities and Resources

Item 2: The school environment is clean and well maintained.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	52	3 (6%)	14 (27%)	23 (44%)	12 (23%)	2.85	0.85
After	46	3 (7%)	25 (54%)	11 (24%)	4 (9%)	2.28	0.81
Item 3: The physical environment supports teaching and learning.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	52	0 (0%)	3 (58%)	29 (56%)	20 (38%)	3.33	0.58
After	46	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	24 (52%)	21 (46%)	3.41	0.58
Item 4: The reliability and speed of the Internet connections in this school are sufficient to support instructional practices.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	52	0 (0%)	8 (15%)	33 (63%)	11 (21%)	3.01	0.61
After	46	0 (0%)	4 (9%)	33 (72%)	9 (20%)	3.10	0.53

If the entire section regarding attitudes towards school facilities and resources are looked at in a summative manner, then there was little impact on the attitudes and opinions when looking at the before and after. With the after response Mean dropping for Item 2, but slightly raising for Item 3 and Item 4, there was little impact from our project.

The next selected survey question was in a category by itself regarding community support. The question wanted staff to answer how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement, "The community we serve is supportive of this school". The responses were probably impacted by the site visits that were conducted at the beginning of the project, where we took staff and principals to high performing schools that seemed to all have a strong community presence in their schools. The

results did show a slight drop in the average for this question, going from 3.12 to 2.76.

Table 4

Community Support and Involvement

Item 5: The community we serve is supportive of this school.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	51	1 (2%)	4 (8%)	34 (67%)	12 (24%)	3.12	0.62
After	46	3 (7%)	14 (30%)	20 (43%)	9 (20%)	2.76	0.84

The dramatic change in responses regarding community support may be that a large percentage of teachers went from believing we had community support, to not believing we had community support because of being exposed to community support at the other high performing schools. This definitely could be viewed that we have a negative effect on teacher attitudes regarding this response. But it seemed to also impact staff towards an added effort to seek out support of the community in various activities, such as celebration days for students, bigger awards days planned, fundraisers for needy students, and collaborative projects between schools were held. The continued monitoring of the community support items on the TELL survey will be the only way to see long term impact.

The next set of selected questions from the TELL survey involved Managing Student Behavior. While this was not the main focus of the project, helping with student behavior did become an important aspect of the project. At Garrison Elementary, the pullout program was focused on helping struggling students improve

reading, mathematics and behavior. At the Career and Tech Center, one goal chosen by the school was having students to demonstrate the importance of their educational programs to younger students, instead of trying to convince the high school students of the importance. The main goal at the first school, Laurel Elementary, was to increase student achievement and the method discussed to change was to make sure students were the hardest working in the building.

The many questions in this section looked at everything from students knowing expectations, teachers enforcing rules, administrators support, and the school having policies and procedures in place that are understood. The TELL survey results for the three schools showed lower means in all categories, except for the Item 8, concerning the policies and procedures being understood by the faculty. All other items had small or significant drops in the mean scores. The greatest drop was Item 7, concerning teachers' opinions on students at this school follow rules of conduct.

Table 5

Managing Student Conduct

Item 6: Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	52	2 (4%)	2 (4%)	31 (60%)	17 (33%)	3.21	0.70
After	46	2 (4%)	13 (28%)	22 (48%)	9 (20%)	2.83	0.80
Item 7: Students at this school follow rules of conduct.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	51	0 (0%)	6 (12%)	34 (67%)	9 (17%)	3.05	0.54
After	46	6 (13%)	23 (50%)	13 (28%)	4 (9%)	2.32	0.81
Item 8: Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	50	0 (0%)	3 (6%)	29 (58%)	32 (21%)	3.01	0.56
After	46	0 (0%)	9 (20%)	27 (59%)	10 (22%)	3.02	0.65
Item 9: School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	51	1 (2%)	12 (24%)	25 (49%)	13 (25%)	2.98	0.76
After	46	4 (9%)	19 (41%)	15 (33%)	8 (17%)	2.59	0.88
Item 10: School administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	52	1 (2%)	7 (13%)	29 (56%)	15 (29%)	3.11	0.70
After	46	3 (7%)	14 (30%)	17 (37%)	12 (26%)	2.83	0.90
Item 11: Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	52	0 (0%)	5 (10%)	31 (60%)	16 (31%)	3.21	0.61
After	46	3 (7%)	16 (35%)	19 (41%)	8 (17%)	2.70	0.84

Looking at Item 6, teacher opinions dropped by a mean score of 3.21 before project to 2.83 after the project. Item 7, teacher opinions significantly dropped by 0.73 in mean score. Item 8, teacher opinions practically stayed the same. Items 9, 10, and 11 all showed moderate drop in teachers opinions. The Item 11, Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct dropped from 3.21 mean score to 2.70 mean score. This is a question asking teachers opinion of how teachers do.

Unfortunately, the project lowered teacher opinions in several of these areas. The need to follow long term effects on TELL survey results. The hope is that actions are continuing to take place to improve on all these areas.

The selected set of questions regarding Teacher Leadership focused on teachers being leaders, faculty having procedures for group decisions and having steps to solve problems. The Items 12, 13 and 14 are focused on teachers being part of the leadership process and decision making. Two of the three schools have Kentucky law supported, site base decision making councils, while the CTC is part of the high school and does not have representation on the council.

Table 6

Teacher Leadership

Item 12: Teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	49	0 (0%)	5 (10%)	31 (63%)	16 (33%)	3.21	0.61
After	46	3 (7%)	16 (35%)	19 (41%)	8 (17%)	2.70	0.84
Item 13: The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	51	0 (0%)	10 (20%)	28 (55%)	16 (31%)	3.20	0.67
After	45	1 (2%)	8 (17%)	18 (40%)	18 (40%)	3.18	0.81
Item 14: In this school, we take steps to solve problems.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	48	0 (0%)	5 (13%)	28 (56%)	15 (29%)	3.21	0.62
After	45	3 (7%)	10 (30%)	21 (37%)	11 (26%)	2.89	0.86

All Items 12-14, concerning Teacher Leadership, had teacher opinions that lowered after the central office staff had done the capstone project. The Item 12, Teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles went down significantly. Unfortunate timing of the project and survey may have affected the responses, because the CTC were trying to become part of the high school site based

council during this time and found little to no support from the superintendent at that time. Also during this time, the district experienced 4 different superintendents of schools. Each new superintendent seemed to have different views of what faculty were expected to do.

School Leadership was the topic of Items 15-18. The questions ranged from school leadership supporting teachers, leadership using data, faculty held to high standards, and leadership addressing teacher concerns. Overall, the means remained relatively unchanged in all areas. Three areas saw a very slight increase, while item 17 remained exactly the same with a mean of 3.47. The project appeared to have very little effect on faculty opinions and perceptions of school leadership.

Table 7

School Leadership

Item 15: The school leadership consistently supports teachers.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	50	2 (4%)	9 (18%)	25 (50%)	14 (28%)	3.02	0.80
After	45	2 (4%)	8 (18%)	21 (47%)	14 (31%)	3.04	0.82
Item 16: Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	50	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	28 (56%)	21 (42%)	3.40	0.53
After	46	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	22 (48%)	22 (48%)	3.43	0.58
Item 17: The school leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	49	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	24 (49%)	24 (49%)	3.47	0.54
After	45	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	24 (53%)	21 (47%)	3.47	0.50
Item 18: The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about instructional practices and support.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	49	0 (0%)	5 (10%)	32 (65%)	12 (24%)	3.14	0.58
After	46	0 (0%)	4 (9%)	29 (63%)	11 (24%)	3.16	0.57

The best scores overall from the selected questions in this project were from this School Leadership section. The principals had relatively high scores going into this project and retained high scores regarding these selected questions. Each principal does have a strong personality and obvious deep caring for the success of their students and staff. Each principal continues to look for strategies and ways to improve student achievement even after the project was completed.

The next item was about the staff's opinion on our local professional development. The staff were asked to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement, "Professional development enhances teachers' abilities to improve student learning." With 49 answering before the project and 46 answering after the project, there was little change in their opinion. The mean before was 3.12 and the

mean after the project was 3.19, showing very little effect from the central office staff conducting the projects.

Table 8

Professional Development

Item 19: Professional development enhances teachers' abilities to improve student learning.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	49	1 (2%)	3 (6%)	34 (69%)	11 (22%)	3.12	0.60
After	46	1 (2%)	3 (7%)	28 (61%)	14 (30%)	3.19	0.65

An interesting note about the professional development item was the fact that the state of Kentucky is still going through major cuts to the professional development funding. With the cuts, these three schools were allowed to do more local professional development activities. During the project at Garrison Elementary, central office staff coordinated free professional development sessions from the local state Educational Development Corps. This was in response to staff requesting this professional development training.

The last questions selected from the TELL survey that were examined during this project dealt with Instructional Practices and Support. More specifically the questions asked about faculty opinions on data being timely, teachers encouraged to experiment, TELL survey results being used, and overall school being a good place. The questions had all relatively high scores prior to the project that faculty had high agreement means of 3.02 up to 3.38. The highest 3.38 mean was for the statement that

faculty agreed or strongly agreed that, "overall, my school is a good place to work and learn".

Table 9

Instructional Practices and Support

Item 20: Local assessment data are available in time to impact instructional practices.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	51	0 (0%)	5 (10%)	32 (63%)	14 (27%)	3.18	0.59
After	46	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	30 (65%)	14 (30%)	3.26	0.53
Item 21: Teachers are encouraged to try new things to improve instruction.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	49	0 (0%)	4 (8%)	34 (69%)	11 (22%)	3.14	0.54
After	45	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	31 (69%)	12 (27%)	3.22	0.52
Item 22: Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	52	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	17 (37%)	29 (56%)	3.38	0.84
After	46	0 (0%)	3 (7%)	22 (48%)	21 (46%)	3.39	0.61
Item 23: At this school, we utilize the results from the TELL KY survey as a tool for school improvement.							
	N	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Before	42	3 (7%)	3 (7%)	26 (62%)	10 (24%)	3.02	0.78
After	38	3 (8%)	6 (16%)	19 (50%)	10 (26%)	2.95	0.87

While all the items staying relatively unchanged from the project was a positive, since the scores started out relatively high and that is a positive for the three schools. The item that is very good to see unchanged was Item 22, concerning teacher opinion of the overall feeling that the school is a good place to teach and learn. The means, before 3.38 and after 3.39, shows no significant affect by the central office staff being present regularly in the school. While the expectations were that the faculty could have lower views of their school with the constant presence of

central office staff, the actual results show that there was little impact in staff opinions.

In conclusion of looking at staff opinions via the TELL survey. The expectations of the project that test scores would go up, but opinions shared on the TELL survey could go down were not completely defensible. All schools found favorable improvement in the test scores, but the TELL survey results did not go down significantly with the presence of central office staff. The belief that the presence of supervisors being in the building more consistently would lower opinions, may have been rectified by the fact that both central office staff made sure to stay positive in interactions with all staff and students. The 8 different school related areas, ranging from teacher protected time, facilities, community, leadership (both teacher and administration), professional development, instructional practices and overall support showed that there was little negative effect on teacher opinions. While each school focused on slightly different goals resulting in slightly different uses of central office staff the overall opinions stayed similar when looking at individual school surveys. The three schools were combined to produce the results in tables 3-10 and little overall impact from the project is seen when looking holistically at all 23 survey items.

Limitations of the study

This study sought to determine if positive interactions by Central Office Staff had an effect on staff attitudes and student achievement. This study was limited to only two elementary schools and a career and tech center. Each of these three

buildings employs principals/supervisors that were males. Further work needs to be done at the other elementary schools, middle school and high school. Additional limitations include underdeveloped relationships with administrators at the other schools in the district. Another limitation of the study is the personality and attitude of other district staff members and how they have created challenges to acceptance within the schools. Additional research would add to the reliability and validity of the findings that arise from our research. The survey questions were not complete and were scrutinized for biases. The student achievement results that were reviewed were affected by many factors other than the four additional steps performed by the central office staff.

Duration of the Study

This study was conducted over a 3 year period. One limitation was the duration of the study. Although the study was conducted over a 3 year period, the researchers only physically spent time within each school for a one year period.

Delineation of work

In order for this project to truly be successful, we understood it took equal dedication and work from all members involved. The proximity of our workstations enables us to communicate on a regular basis and to work effectively and efficiently on the project. We are able to keep each other on track and focused throughout the process and ensure that our parts of the project are flowing together for a comprehensive final product. We were unfortunately separated with district changes, but continued to work individually on certain aspects of the project and remained in

constant contact about each individual part to help insure that we were able to complete the project in a timely manner. The culmination of the capstone project resulted in the development of a professional learning series that will help school districts address low performing schools with the implementation of central office staff into a power of positive mindset to help improve student achievement.

Nick Adams worked directly with data related to Laurel Elementary School and Garrison Elementary School, including the analysis of TELL KY Survey data for those two schools. Additionally, the researchers studied those practices that have been put into place in those two schools. After test score data was released during the 2012-2013 school year, the researcher established a team of committee members that were valued and trusted at Laurel Elementary School and began conversations about how district staff could help create an atmosphere of change within the school to lead to school improvement. Data analysis, mentoring sessions, site visits, and growth mindset workshops were implemented at the school level with the assistance of the Principal at the school.

These same principles were followed during the 2013-2014 school year at Garrison Elementary School. Resources and support were provided to the administration, which were then presented to the staff at the schools. TELL survey data was analyzed during the process, and, upon completion of the school year, an additional TELL like survey was administered and comparisons were made to help draw conclusions about the impact of district staff in the improvement process of low performing schools.

Tiffany Felty worked directly with the data related for Foster Meade Career and Technical Center (FMCTC). She analyzed the TELL KY Survey data related directly to FMCTC and looked at current practices that are in place at the school. Site visits were conducted to help administration and teachers see dynamics of high performing Career and Technical Centers. District staff followed the same implementation strategies as were performed at the elementary schools in terms of mentoring sessions, growth mindset principles, and data analysis.

Cooperatively, the team compared the practices that are currently in place at Laurel Elementary and Garrison Elementary and how they differed from those practices in place at FMCTC. After the comparison was made, the team worked cooperatively to implement those practices and procedures to impact student achievement by utilizing activities that incorporated all three schools in collaborative activities such as tours and CTC students teaching elementary students.

Reflections

“Decades of evidence have shown that school improvements tend not to deepen at single schools or spread across schools without substantial support from district central offices.” (Copland and Honig, 2010). Reflecting upon the implementation of district staff in assisting low performing schools, there were many key components that surfaced throughout the process. The researchers found it is important to understand that effective implementation of these strategies and ideas is most successful when district staff are paired with building level administrators that

are willing to embrace district staff in their building and are willing to be the catalyst for change within their schools.

The capstone project and the Power of Positive Professional Development were designed to empower school leaders and encourage those leaders to embrace and welcome the assistance of district staff in helping move schools forward. The key elements of the professional development included:

- Allowing participants in the capstone project to explore growth mindset strategies.
- Establish positive relationships between district staff and building level administration and teachers.
- Shifting mindsets of building staff to a more understanding relationship from district staff. (District staff were not out playing “gotcha”)
- Developing professional development for administrators and aspiring administrators to help focus the process of becoming a higher performing school.
- Modeling activities and mentorships that can be replicated within other schools and with other adults in the community.
- Creating a cohort of administrators that have grown together professionally.

What do you plan to do with your findings?

The findings of this work could be beneficial to both school level administrators as well as district level administration. The researchers plan to turn our

findings and process into a professional learning series that can be presented through a series of workshops to help districts across the state and nation utilize district staff and the power of positive reinforcement and thinking in the process of helping low performing schools increase success on testing and accountability procedures.

Capstone Project

During the coursework of the doctoral program, several ideas were discussed as the “culminating project” of the program. Through our own trials and successes as educators, we determined there was a need to help bridge the gap between the staff at the district level and the staff in the buildings. However, we also realized it was not as simple as showing up at the doorstep of a school in need and proclaiming we were there to help. It has been our experience through conversations with various staff members that district staff often brings a level of disapproval when they show up in the school unannounced.

After discussion and thought, it was determined that we would take a look at what teachers perceptions of district staff were, and then use that information to build a presentation that could help strengthen the relationship between the two groups that will help improved low performing schools.

Positive Relationships

In order for the process to be successful and replicated there are steps and ideas that need to be followed. It was our observation that the first and possibly the most important step in the process was to have a positive relationship established with the administrator of the building. Throughout the process there are tough

conversations that have to be held. By having a positive relationship with the building level administrator those difficult conversations can take place. They can be viewed as an opportunity for growth rather than an opportunity to attack or criticize. If district staff are going to be charged with going into low performing schools to assist, it is important to match the personalities of the district staff and the building staff.

Assistance

After it has been established that positive and trusting relationships exist, acknowledging need and seeking assistance could be the most important step in the process. As humans, we don't like to admit defeat or to ask for help at a task that we have been given. Many times this is true in our educational fields as well. It is important for the building level administrators to acknowledge a need exists in their school. Otherwise, they may feel threatened or overtaken if district staff try to acknowledge that need for them. Once the need has been acknowledged, a further plan is developed to address the major areas of concern.

Growth Mindset

The next factor to consider, which might be the most important step in the process is the "growth mindset" of the administration and staff (Dweck, 2006). We often think of growth mindset in relation to our students, when in reality, in order for fundamental change to take place at the building level, the administration and staff need to have a growth mindset for themselves and their entire school community. Adults in the school need to view themselves as lifelong learners and capable of change in order to help turn around low performing schools.

If the adults in the building feel they are capable of growing, learning new things, and are not afraid of failure, they can try new things in their schools, step out of their comfort zone, and embrace new ideas and principles that may help turn the direction of low performing schools. One recommendation that was developed as a result of the capstone process is a book study using a book on growth mindset. It is recommended that the district staff complete the book study with administrators, and then for the administrators to then replicate the process with the teachers and staff in the building. This task could be accomplished through weekly PLCs, weekly mentoring sessions, or monthly teachers meetings.

Establish Presence

Establishing a presence in the schools was quite possibly the most important step in improving low performing schools. In order for the school staff to build a trusting relationship with district administration, the school needs to see your presence and trust that you are there for their greater good. It is important for them to see that you are willing to invest time and effort in their success. It was our observation in our district that policies or programs would be mandated to the schools without much guidance or support for the follow through, which would leave the schools feeling disgruntled and overwhelmed at the process. Invest time in the schools. Invest time in the students. The more invested you can be in the school, the more buy in you will get from the adults in the school. They will see your desire for improvement for them. They will see that you want success for them. Be physically

present. Be positive while you are present. Get involved in mentoring. Mentor teachers, administrators, and work with students while you are there.

Site visit. Site visits to high performing schools could possibly be the most important aspect of the entire process. Before just showing up at a school and walking through the halls aimlessly, during mentoring sessions with the building administration, develop a plan on the “what to look for”. It is our recommendation to look at: instructional strategies; pullout programs; leadership techniques; software; student work showcased. This list is certainly not all inclusive and it is essential that additional “look for” are added that meet the needs of each individual school. This is just a good starting point to guide the discussion and visit.

It is also recommended that the team that goes on the site visit meet together once back at school for a time of debriefing. This provides an opportunity for each member to discuss what they saw, what they liked, what might work in their school, etc. After the debriefing session, a presentation is recommended to the entire staff to discuss the ideas and concepts that were observed during the site visit. It is also important to understand that a site visit isn’t necessarily a once and done procedure or step in the process. There are many schools across the state that are doing wonderful and amazing things. Go see them. Talk about them. Take your staff out to lunch. Spend time getting to know your people on the ride to and from the visit. It will do more for the improvement of your school culture and climate that you could imagine.

Through this process, change should begin to occur. Behaviors will change. Goals will change. Mindsets will change. These changes should ultimately lead to

improvement of low performing schools. Will there be hold-outs? Of course there will be. Stay focused. Stay positive. Focus on the staff that can be influenced rather than the ones that cannot. The process is fluid. It is not a “step 1, step 2, step 3” approach to school improvement. All of the steps are important, and none are more important than the previous or the one after. Remember, it is a process. Change is hard. Change hurts. Stay present. Stay positive.

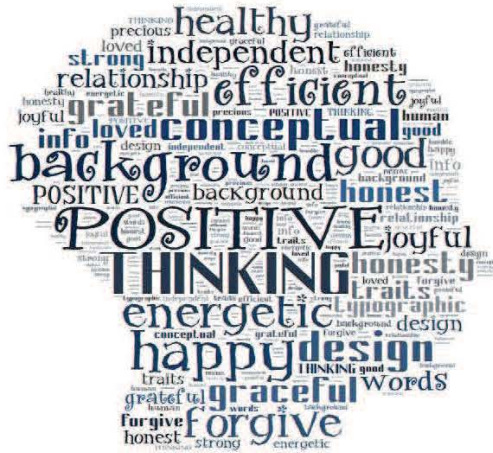
The process outlined in the following slides has been modeled at three schools in the school district, and variations of the process have been modeled at the other three schools in the district all with success in improving low performing schools.

This presentation was designed to be delivered at the local and regional levels to initiate conversations and open communication lines between staff at the district level and staff at the school level. The following slides are excerpts from the presentation and are used as conversation starters in professional development training sessions to help facilitate the process of utilizing district staff to help improve low performing schools. A full video of the capstone project can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57V1onLH4H8>. It is important to understand the full effect of the project should not be judged by words on a paper or a video of a PowerPoint presentation. The real value of this project is in the relationships that are established between the district level and the school level and the change that occurs as a result of those positive relationships.



**Utilizing District staff in Improving Low
Performing Schools**

**Presented by:
Nick Adams and Tiffany Felty**



Agenda

- **Welcome and Introductions**
 - **Get to know BINGO**
- **Overview of the day**
- **Presentation:**
 - **The Power of Positive-Utilizing district staff in improving low performing schools**
- **Questions and wrap- up**

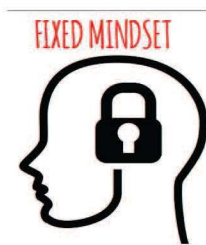
***EILA certificates are available at the end of the presentation.**

Get To Know You BINGO

Likes cats better than dogs	Loves to watch sports	Checks Facebook daily	Sings in the shower or bathtub	Shops online
Never swears	Likes to do gardening	Likes Coke better than Pepsi	Decorates for holidays	Loves to hike or to walk
Has freckles	Has followed directions and built/made something	FREE	Went on a blind date	Can whistle loudly
Still watches the old black and white TV shows	Hates mice or snakes	Is the youngest child	Still knows their high school song	Votes every election
Loves to travel	Has caught a fish	Hates to watch the news	Likes to dance	Hates liver and onions

Fixed Mindset

- I can do it or I can't
- If I fail, I am no good
- My ability determines my everything
- I don't like to be challenged
- I give up
- I will never be that smart
- This is TOO hard



Growth Mindset

- I can learn anything I want to
- I am inspired by the success of others
- I can always improve
- I will learn how to do this
- There's always plan b.
- Mistakes help me learn





- 1. What are the potential benefits of site visits?**
- 2. What are the potential short falls or disadvantages of site visits?**
- 3. If you could pick any district to visit, where would you take a team and why?**

- 1. How could mentoring benefit your:**
 - Students?**
 - Teachers?**
 - District staff?**
- 2. What capacity could you use your district staff in to mentor?**



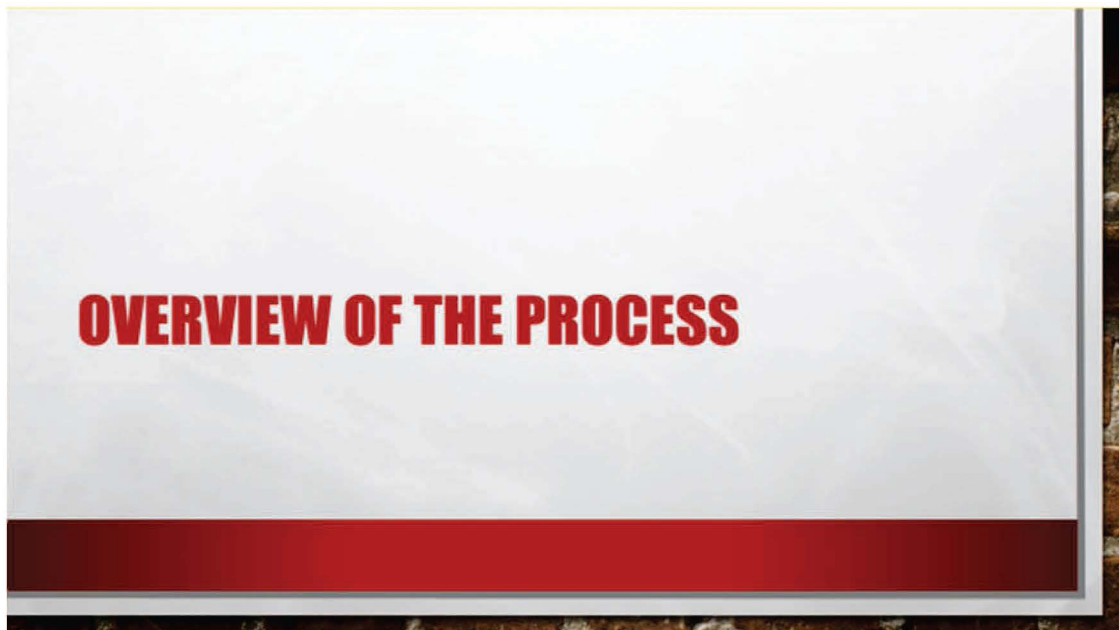


TABLE TALK

BRAINSTORM WITH YOUR TABLE SEVERAL IDEAS/STRATEGIES YOU HAVE FOR IMPROVING LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS. BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS WHY YOU FEEL THESE STRATEGIES AND IDEAS WILL BE BENEFICIAL.



SHARE OUT

TABLE 1

TABLE 2

TABLE 3

SITE VISIT TO A HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOL/DISTRICT

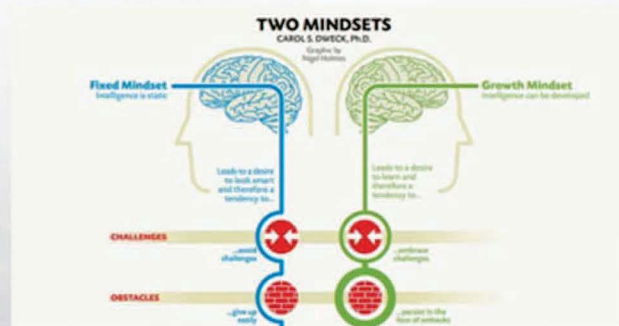


WHY WOULD WE DO THAT?

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

- **THINK ABOUT WAYS THE GROWTH MINDSET COULD IMPROVE LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS. PAIR UP WITH SOMEONE FROM YOUR TABLE AND SHARE YOUR IDEAS.**

THE GROWTH MINDSET



HEAR WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY.

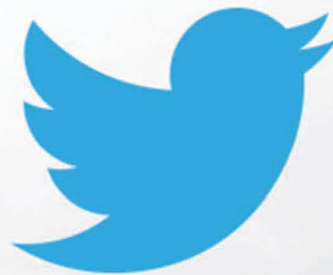
STICKY NOTE STORM



- THERE ARE STICKY NOTES ON EACH OF YOUR TABLES. THINK ABOUT UTILIZING YOUR STAFF FROM THE DISTRICT OFFICE IN MENTORING AND COACHING LOW PERFORMING STUDENTS. WHAT WOULD THAT LOOK LIKE? HOW WOULD YOU USE THEM? WOULD THIS WORK IN YOUR SCHOOL? JOT DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS AND IDEAS ON YOUR STICKY NOTE AND THEN PUT THEM ON THE WALL.

TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT!

THINK*TWEET*SHARE

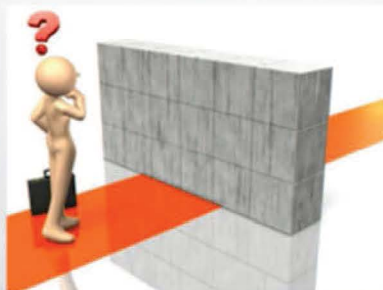


- **IN 140 CHARACTERS OR LESS, EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF DISTRICT LEVEL STAFF BEING VISIBLE IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING.**

VISIBLE DISTRICT STAFF



LET'S TALK ABOUT BARRIERS



SO WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO ABOUT IT?

WHAT'S
NEXT STEP **YOUR** **?**

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Appendix

Survey

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the use of time in your school. Use the following scale: Strongly agree, Agreee, Disagree, Strongly disagree

1. Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school facilities and resources.

2. The school environment is clean and well maintained.

3. The physical environment of classrooms in this school supports teaching and learning.

4. The reliability and speed of Internet connections in this school are sufficient to support instructional practices.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about community support and involvement in your school.

5. The community we serve is supportive of this school.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about managing student conduct in your school.

6. Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.

7. Students at this school follow rules of conduct.

8. Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty.

9. School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.

10. School administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.

11. Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about teacher leadership in your school.

- 12. Teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles.
- 13. The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems.
- 14. In this school, we take steps to solve problems.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about school leadership in your school.

- 15. The school leadership consistently supports teachers.
- 16. Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.
- 17. The school leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning.
- 18. The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about Instructional practices and support.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about professional development in your school.

- 19. Professional development enhances teachers' abilities to improve student learning.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about instructional practices and support in your school.

- 20. Local assessment data are available in time to impact instructional practices.
- 21. Teachers are encouraged to try new things to improve instruction.
- 22. Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.
- 23. At this school, we utilize the results from the TELL Kentucky Survey as a tool for school improvement.

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